

Washington, DC – In testimony today before the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands, Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) urged swift approval of HR 6290, the Lewis and Clark Mt. Hood Wilderness Act of 2008. This bill would enhance protection for the Mt. Hood National Forest through the designation of 132,000 acres of new Wilderness, 34,000 acres of National Recreation Areas, and 79 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers. It would also address challenges related to transportation, recreation, and forest management; preserve Native American treaty rights; and provide a permanent solution for protecting Mt. Hood's north side.

Blumenauer said, "Since 2003, I have worked with local stakeholders and the other members of the Oregon delegation to develop a comprehensive approach to the problems the mountain faces, the opportunities it affords, and ways we can meet the demands of the future. I urge the Committee to move this bill forward as quickly as possible, so that the thousands of Oregonians who have put time and effort into developing this legislation will be able to see their vision for the mountain realized."

HR 6290 was introduced by Blumenauer in June, 2008. Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Congresswoman Darlene Hooley (D-OR), and Congressman David Wu (D-OR) are original cosponsors. A similar version, S. 647, has passed the Senate's Energy and Natural Resources Committee and awaits floor passage.

Today's hearing also featured testimony on DeFazio's HR 6291, the Oregon Treasures Act of 2008, of which Blumenauer is an original cosponsor. The bill would provide additional protection for Oregon's Wild Rogue River and the Oregon Caves National Monument.